

## ***Student as Producer Conference***

### **Report for Education Committee – 25 September 2013**

The Student as Producer Conference was held at the University of Lincoln on 26 and 27 June 2013. The event marked the end of the funded period of the Student as Producer project, and represented a significant component of the project's dissemination plan: intended to showcase project activities and outcomes, as well as sharing the experiences of colleagues nationally and internationally who are engaged in similar work. The event was designed to serve the dual function of an internal teaching and learning event as well as a forum for sector-wide debate and sharing of practice, and anticipated a roughly equal number of internal and external delegates.

A call for papers was issued in December 2012, with a deadline of 18 Feb 2013. 27 proposals were accepted for inclusion in the conference as either 30 minute paper presentations or 60 minute workshops. Of these, 18 were presented by external delegates and 9 by colleagues at the University of Lincoln.

In addition, there were 2 external keynote speakers:

- Professor Philippa Levy: Deputy Chief Executive of the Higher Education Academy
- Professor Stuart Hampton-Reeves: Professor of Research-informed Teaching at the University of Central Lancashire and chair of the British Conference of Undergraduate Research

Professor Mike Neary gave a keynote address on the institutional perspective, while Dan Derricott spoke about the student perspective

All available resources from the conference, including presentation slides and videos of the keynote addresses, are available on the conference website at <http://saspcconf13.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/>

The event attracted 110 delegates, of which 58 were staff and students of the University of Lincoln. Internal delegates were not charged a fee, while external delegates were charged on a 'break-even' basis, with optional additional charges for accommodation and the conference dinner, held at the White Hart Hotel.

### **Reflection and Evaluation**

The general feeling was that the conference was extremely successful, and many delegates commented on the 'buzz' of excitement and enthusiasm that was generated.

Many externals expressed surprise that there were not more delegates. The response from the sector confirms that there is considerable interest in Student as Producer as a concept, and the experience at Lincoln of implementing an institution-wide strategy of research-engaged teaching and learning. A more concerted attempt to promote the event nationally could almost certainly have attracted many more delegates.

However, space constraints were a particular concern, as the refurbishment of the Main Building meant that there was a shortage of suitably sized rooms for a larger event, while catering would have become problematic with larger numbers. In addition, there were difficulties arranging accommodation with local hotels. The small numbers actually

contributed to the more intimate feel of the conference and did not generally detract from the quality of the experience of those who attended.

An online evaluation was circulated after the event, and received 20 responses. Asked to rate the general organisation, keynote speakers and workshops, over 90% of respondents rated each of these 3 aspects as either excellent or good, with no ratings of poor or very poor.

When asked what was most useful about the conference, typical comments included:

*For me the best aspect was seeing the reality on the ground of an institution which has this philosophy embedded in its processes and strategies - the chance to see that messiness and contestation is actually part of the process. The relaxed resilience of the leadership team was both reassuring and inspiring.*

*the vibe - it seemed like a genuine and shared endeavour, not a simulacrum or paying lip service, which is all too common i think. Participants appeared to have a deep stake in the meaning and value and complexity of SaP*

Suggestions for improvement focussed largely on more delegates, and more time and space for discussion – as well as a few comments about signage and catering

*I had thought there would be more participants from other universities but perhaps i am naive. I wondered if more students presenting from Lincoln might have been interesting. I really valued the students from other universities contribution in the workshops.*

*If space and time had allowed, a bigger and even more internationalised conference would have been good, with wider student and non-academic representation from external (to LIncoln) institutions*

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